

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for detecting potential counterfeiting of print cartridges comprising at least one printing device programmed to:
read date information from an installed print cartridge, and
transmit a message regarding said date information to a monitoring server.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein said monitoring server is programmed to analyze said messages from monitored printing devices for patterns indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein said monitoring server is programmed to automatically transmit notification of detection of a pattern indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein:
said printing device includes a memory storing data about said printing device; and
said message conveys said data about said printing device.
5. The system of claim 4, wherein said data about said printing device includes a location of said printing device.
6. The system of claim 1, wherein said printing device further comprises an electronic connection configured to be connected to an electronic memory unit on a print cartridge installed in said printing device.

7. The system of claim 2, wherein said printing device has a connection to the Internet over which said message is transmitted to said monitoring server.

8. The system of claim 2, wherein said monitoring server saves messages from monitored printing devices in memory.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein said printing device is further programmed to

read a current date from a clock in said printing device,
compare said date information and said current date, and
transmit said message if a difference between said current date and said date information exceeds a predetermined threshold.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein said printing device is programmed to compare said date information and said current date each time said printing device is powered up.

11. The system of claim 9, wherein said printing device is programmed to compare said date information and said current date when a print cartridge is installed in said printing device.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein said printing device is programmed to transmit said message each time said printing device is powered up.

13. The system of claim 1, wherein said printing device is programmed to transmit said message when a print cartridge is installed in said printing device.

14. A method for detecting potential counterfeiting of print cartridges comprising transmitting a message regarding date information stored on a print

cartridge installed in a printing device, said message being transmitted to a monitoring server.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising reading said date information from a memory on said print cartridge.

16. The method of claim 14, further comprising analyzing messages from monitored printing devices with said monitoring server for patterns indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising automatically transmitting notification of detection of a pattern indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein said message further comprises data about said printing device.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said data about said printing device comprises a location of said printing device.

20. The method of claim 14, further comprising transmitting said message to said monitoring server from said printing device over the Internet.

21. The method of claim 14, further comprising saving messages from monitored printing devices in memory on said monitoring server.

22. The method of claim 14, further comprising:
reading a current date from a clock in said printing device,
comparing said date information and said current date, and
transmitting said message if a difference between said current date and said date information exceeds a predetermined threshold.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising comparing said date information and said current date each time said printing device is powered up.

24. The method of claim 22, further comprising comparing said date information and said current date when a print cartridge is installed in said printing device.

25. The method of claim 14, further comprising transmitting said message each time said printing device is powered up.

26. The method of claim 14, further comprising transmitting said message when a print cartridge is installed in said printing device.

27. A system for detecting potential counterfeiting of print cartridges comprising a monitoring server programmed to:

receive messages from a population of monitored printing device, wherein each said message includes date information from a print cartridge installed in a monitored printing device, and

analyze said messages from monitored printing devices for patterns indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein said monitoring server is further programmed to automatically transmit notification of detection of a pattern indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein said messages further comprise data about the printing device sending the message.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein said data about the printing device comprises a location of said printing device.

31. The system of claim 27, wherein said monitoring server is configured for connection to the Internet and receives said messages over the Internet.

32. A system for detecting potential counterfeiting of print cartridges comprising:

means for transmitting a message from a printing device regarding date information stored on a print cartridge installed in a printing device; and

means for receiving said message and analyzing said message and other messages to identify patterns indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.

33. The system of claim 32, further comprising means for reading said date information from an electronic memory on said print cartridge.

34. The system of claim 32, further comprising means for automatically transmitting notification of detection of a pattern indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.

35. The system of claim 32, wherein said message further comprises data about said printing device.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein said data about said printing device comprises a location of said printing device.

37. The system of claim 32, wherein said means for transmitting said message comprise the Internet.

38. The system of claim 32, further comprising:

means for reading a current date from a clock in said printing device, means for comparing said date information and said current date, and

means for transmitting said message if a difference between said current date and said date information exceeds a predetermined threshold.

39. Processor-readable instructions stored on a medium for storing processor-readable instructions, said instructions, when executed, causing a printing device to:

read date information from an installed print cartridge, and
transmit a message regarding said date information to a monitoring server.

40. The instructions of claim 39, wherein:

said printing device comprises a memory storing data about said printing device; and

said message comprises said data about said printing device.

41. The instructions of claim 40, wherein said data about said printing device comprises a location of said printing device.

42. The instructions of claim 39, wherein instructions, when executed, further cause said printing device to

read a current date from a clock in said printing device,
compare said date information and said current date, and
transmit said message if a difference between said current date and said date information exceeds a predetermined threshold.

43. The instructions of claim 42, wherein said instructions cause said printing device to compare said date information and said current date each time said printing device is powered up.

44. The instructions of claim 42, wherein said instructions cause said printing device to compare said date information and said current date when a print cartridge is installed in said printing device.

45. The instructions of claim 39, wherein said instructions cause said printing device to transmit said message each time said printing device is powered up.

46. The instructions of claim 39, wherein said instructions cause said printing device to transmit said message when a print cartridge is installed in said printing device.

47. Computer-readable instructions stored on a medium for storing computer-readable instructions, said instructions, when executed, causing a monitoring server to:

receive messages from a population of monitored printing device, wherein said messages include date information from a print cartridge installed in a monitored printing device, and

analyze said messages from monitored printing devices for patterns indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.

48. The instructions of claim 47, further causing said monitoring server to automatically transmit notification of detection of a pattern indicative of counterfeiting of print cartridges.